

Group Living Code Amendment

Shelter for the Homeless Problem Statement

Overview

This document outlines problems identified with the Denver Zoning Code (DZC)'s regulations on Shelters for the Homeless. They include problems identified by a committee of service providers, clients and neighborhood representatives, and by Community Planning and Development staff based on their experiences in the field.

Committee Goals

A subcommittee of the Group Living Advisory Committee collaboratively developed and agreed upon a series of goals for shelter uses. These goals served as a lens through which to identify shortcomings in the Denver Zoning Code:

1. Provide for safe, well-managed emergency shelter.
2. Enable path to stable housing for those who are ready
3. Enable supportive services as needed/desired, along continuum of service
4. Be good neighbors, reciprocally, to promote strong, stable neighborhoods.
5. Facilities are located throughout the City and County of Denver in order to provide shelter and services to people in need, helping them to stay in communities they call home and moving toward greater equity across neighborhoods.

Problems identified in the Denver Zoning Code

Potential issues with the Code identified by the Group Living Advisory Committee are listed below. They are further detailed in the full Problem Statement document, available at www.denvergov.org/groupliving.

1. **Current limitations on spacing, density, and size for shelters are difficult to administer and have unintended consequences, including overreliance on emergency determinations to expand existing facilities and continued concentration of legacy facilities in certain neighborhoods.**
2. **City Council districts are the wrong geographic units for regulating the maximum number of beds for shelters as permanent, primary uses.**
3. **The terms “beds” and “residents” are used inconsistently, and the use of “beds” as a measure of facility size does not reflect best practices for limiting the size of shelters.**
4. **Definitions of shelter types are confusing, have ineffective and inequitable public involvement procedures, and make it difficult to combine a continuum of shelter to housing options in one facility.**

Examples: Unintended Consequences, Continuum of Services, Inappropriate Geographic Units

Unintended Consequence

- Concentration of Existing Facilities



Continuum of Services

- Provision of multiple services, multiple housing types at one site



Inappropriate Geographic Units

- City Council Districts change every 10 years

